Dear Providence nurses,

ONA’s 4,000+ Providence nurses have made substantial sacrifices throughout the current pandemic. Providence nurses endure conditions that lag behind other unionized hospitals, including the largest COVID-19 outbreak in the Portland metro-area at Providence Portland Medical Center (PPMC), lower standards for added sick benefits, other safety concerns like fit testing N95s, and routine issues with leaves of absences.

ONA nurses responded by organizing the most prominent actions for nurse and patient safety in the state like our Car Caravan, Nurses’ Bill of Rights, and press conference at PPMC. Our actions led to substantial media coverage and condemnation of Providence from a coalition of community leaders ranging from elected officials, faith leaders, fellow unions, and community groups. The activities recently culminated with a board of community leaders determining Providence administration violated nurse and patient safety throughout the pandemic.

- Click here to view the Protect Nurses, Protect the Community Hearing video

**Medford's Contract Success: A Sign of RN Strength and Momentum**

After nearly a year of negotiations, Providence Medford Medical Center (PMMC) members picked up momentum through a public effort that included pledges from local politicians, coordinated support from fellow unions, and RN actions throughout Providence, as nurses showed public solidarity with ONA members’ at PMMC.

On March 17, PMMC nurses overwhelmingly voted to ratify their new contract as a clear sign of nurses’ strength and momentum at Providence. The agreement includes higher annual raises than their previous contract, added steps to the wage scale, added PTO hours, and improvements to several incentives. It is a clear sign that our strength is growing throughout Providence.

- Click here to read the last PMMC bargaining update for more contract details
Moving Forward: Our Time to Raise Standards is 2021-2022

About 3,500 Providence RNs covered by seven collective bargaining agreements will be at the negotiating table during the next two years. Nurses are the most essential workers during the current pandemic, remain the most respected profession in the U.S., and provide a vast proportion of the direct patient care throughout the Providence Health System. Providence is one of the nation's largest health systems with their assets, according to their own financial records, valued at more than 34 billion dollars. While they denied RNs industry standards for COVID-19 safety protections and benefits, Providence doubled their cash and equivalents, ending 2020 with more than 3 billion dollars in reserve cash on hand. Providence Oregon is the health system's most successful region earning nearly a billion dollars in profits over the previous three years.

Over the next two years, the most essential workers at one of the nation's largest, most well-funded health systems have the opportunity to raise standards during our precedent-setting sacrifice in the ongoing pandemic. Building power to make lasting improvements involves all of us! Here's what Providence nurses can do to make 2021-2022 standards changing years.

Worksite Action Meetings

Member Leaders from several bargaining units have committed to scheduling worksite meetings to kick-off our effort to raise standards throughout Providence. It's an opportunity to improve immediate workplace concerns and build long-term efforts to improve contracts throughout the system. Look out for worksite flyers, upcoming email invitations, and other info from your bargaining unit leadership as we get virtual meetings scheduled!

Addressing Sedgwick's Leave of Absence Denials & Pay Coding Errors

Nurses throughout Providence continue to report inappropriate complications and denials of leave of absence requests. Oregon Nurses Association is currently coordinating with an attorney to support members throughout the system and improve results.

The following steps are underway:

- **Association Grievance Rates of Pay:** Nurses in a bargaining unit have filed a group grievance to address the rate of pay discrepancies that have occurred during Leave of Absences.
- **Request for Information:** ONA is resubmitting an information request for Sedgwick's Leave of absence policies and the contracts between Providence and Sedgwick. We will also use this information request to check if there are other instances of pay discrepancies that went unnoticed by members on leave.
- **Member Support:** ONA is working on a Leave of Absence checklist to assist members when engaging with Sedgwick.
- **Building Cases:** Part of our coordination involves identifying violations of protected leave laws. We’ve created an electronic reporting form for members who’ve been wrongfully denied benefits or faced unnecessary delays. We're encouraging members who have received a denial in writing to submit concerns. Your story could help us build a case against Sedgwick's delay or denial practices at the bargaining table or through potential litigation. A link to the form will be sent out shortly.

Home Care RNs Fighting Corporatization of Community Care
As Providence continues to expand, it demands ever-increasing productivity from nurses and other care providers. This is especially apparent among Home Health RNs in the Providence system. Providence recently announced drastically increased patient care loads for Home Health RNs. Despite nurses raising serious concerns about the negative impact these changes will have on patient care and offering specific examples of near miss sentinel events, Providence has continued to push nurses past their limits with high patient loads.

Unlike nurses in the hospital setting, Home Health RNs are not protected by Oregon's Hospital Nurse Staffing Law. Without the legal right to work as equals through staffing committees to set reasonable staffing plans, home health nurses have exercised their rights as a union to open bargaining over this change.

Providence Home Health & Hospice has so far refused to come to the bargaining table.

Meanwhile, small groups of home health nurses affiliated with our Providence Seaside Hospital and Providence Hood River Medical Center bargaining units have also filed requests to bargain over these changes. Nurses are currently planning a meeting of home health nurses across all three bargaining units to organize and strategize together. Home health RNs will receive an update with meeting information during the next few weeks.

If you have any questions, please contact your ONA labor representative or visit the ONA Providence systemwide updates webpage here.